

May 20, 2025
5:30 PM

The City Council of the City of Inverness met on the above date in Regular Session at 212 W. Main Street, with the following members present:

President Davis
Vice President Lizanich
Councilwoman Bega
Councilwoman Hepfer
Councilman Craig
Mayor Plaisted

Also present were City Manager Williams, City Attorney Hartley, Staff Members, and City Clerk Jackson.

The Invocation was given by Mayor Plaisted and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by the City Council.

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to accept the Agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.

PRE-SCHEDULED APPEARANCES

4) US Water Annual Report with Public Works Director Pell introducing US Water representatives, Chris Saliba and Dennis Muldoon. It was noted since 2018, the City has enjoyed a successful public private partnership (PPP) for the operation of the City's utility plant facilities and other specified services. This has proven to be the most effective and efficient way of operating the City's utility plants and lift stations. City Staff continues to manage all the distribution and transmission lines for the water and wastewater systems and handle the direct customer service elements as well. This annual report outlined FY 2025 accomplishments and milestones reached, and looked at items planned for FY 2026. Councilwoman Hepfer stated the rehab/refurbishment of equipment saves the City money and that is great. Mayor Plaisted questioned what happens during repairs if there would be a system failure. City Manager Williams spoke of Inverness utility rates being the lowest in the surrounding areas and the Utility Master Plan. President Davis questioned future plans and the difference between a target need and a wish list. Dennis Muldoon explained the rotation of certain equipment and a predictive list of needs. *No Action Needed.*

PUBLIC HEARINGS / WORKSHOP

None

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING

Debbie Wheatley – Silverwood spoke of water issue in Oldsmar and questioned the safeguards for the City of Inverness.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

City Attorney Hartley detailed options regarding the CRA to extend an ending date and will present a resolution at a future Council meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Bill Listing*
 - Recommendation – Approval
- b) Council Minutes* – 05/06/2025
 - Recommendation - Approval

Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to accept the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

None

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

10)a) Facility Use Agreement for Boathouse – ROCCS* with Parks & Rec Director Worley stating the Boathouse and dock at Wallace Brooks Park were planned and built in part to provide space for the Rowing Organization of Citrus County Students (ROCCS) to house their equipment, promote/grow the sport of rowing, and provide a space to be a competitive contender to bring more regattas and winter training events to Inverness. ROCCS' mission is to promote competitive rowing (crew & sculling) in Citrus County and to obtain and provide rowing facilities, services, and equipment to carry on the sport. The City partnered with ROCCS for a number of years, with ROCCS hosting several regattas and scrimmage events annually that bring visitors to Inverness to participate in or spectate this growing sport. The current agreement is for another 5-year term, to continue to utilize the Boathouse. Motion, and second, to approve the renewed User Agreement with the Rowing Organization of Citrus County Students (ROCCS) and authorize City Manager to execute the document. **Councilwoman Bega motioned to approve the renewed User Agreement with the Rowing Organization of Citrus County Students (ROCCS) and authorize the City Manager to execute the document. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.**

10)b) Public Art Project – Grace Street Crosswalk* with Program Coordinator Brown stating in April 2021, the City of Inverness initiated its new public art program. The plan was to annually bring a public art installation to Inverness. In that initial year the City unveiled the mural on the side of Coach's Pub & Eatery. In 2022, the City brought forth three projects. The Wallace Brooks Turtle Sculpture and Withlacoochee Trail Bench were repainted, the Outdoor Bike Sculptures were added, and the trash receptacles were wrapped with art from local artists. In 2023, two murals were painted on the side of buildings along N Pine Avenue. In 2024, the Painted Turtle Project was unveiled, which saw 11 turtles displayed in six different locations within the historic downtown. In 2025, the City of Inverness will partner with HCA Florida Citrus Hospital to create a public art crosswalk in front of the emergency room entrance and Grace Street. Recently, there have been pedestrian safety issues at this location. The City has taken steps to slow traffic in this area but sees this location as the perfect opportunity to bring functional public art to the medical district arts district while doubling as traffic-calming measure for the area. Councilwoman Bega questioned if a painted surface cause more maintenance over using pavers. City Manager Williams reminded that this is in the conceptual stage and spoke of the recent traffic incident that brought about the new 3-way stop and streetscape proposal. Councilwoman Hepfer realized this would be traffic calming and spoke of the encouraging view for the patients to look on. Councilman Craig looks forward to future presentation of design, etc. ***No Action Needed.***

10)c) Parks & Recreation Current CIP Projects Update* with Parks & Rec Director Worley stating the Parks & Recreation Department has quite a few projects underway currently. The Liberty Park Boardwalk Rehabilitation Project has been finished. All decking was replaced with premium WearDeck™ composite decking. The walkway railings were strengthened and stabilized, portions of the framing were repaired and strengthened, hardware was added in locations that needed it or where it was missing originally, and a portion of the walkway where benches are located was raised back to the proper level. Whispering Pines Park's new entrance project has been put out for bid with submittals due later this month with anticipated start in the early summer. The Shoreline Restoration project at Wallace Brooks Park has been progressing. This four-part project has been underway for some time and involves multi-agency coordination. Texas Aquatics has completed the shoreline restoration component. American Marine Contractors is handling the other three parts of the project, modifying the T Docks to remove the boat slips and turn the existing gangway into a fixed portion of the pier. The pilings were installed, and the gangway is in place. The final stages of completion are underway and include the metal fabrication of railings so that it is safe for patrons to enjoy. The setting of pilings and buoys for the no-vessel/swim area and dropping the no-wake buoys in the lake are scheduled next, to be completed by the end of the month. The last portion of the project is moving the floating docks down to the Gazebo at Liberty Park and waiting for the permit. This is awaiting permit issuance and will allow the City to move quickly to complete the project. The last project currently underway is the installation of shade structures at the Liberty Park Playground. The structures are scheduled to ship from the manufacturer by the end of the month and the timeline for installation should be within a few weeks of arrival. Mayor Plaisted praised the staff for a great job. He was asked how potential alligator issues will be handled. Councilwoman Hepfer noted it was so nice to see all of this happening and thanked staff. President Davis spoke of the playground shade structures being delivered and hopes that project is completed soon. ***No Action Needed.***

10)d) WWTP Spray Field Lease* with Public Works Director Pell stating the City's wastewater treatment plant includes approximately 100 acres of effluent spray fields that support the City's reclaimed water program. For many years, the City maintained the fencing and managed the mowing of the spray fields. In 2020, the City entered into an agreement to lease the approximately 100 acres of spray fields to Mr. John Thomas for a period of (5) years for an annual sum of \$200.00 paid each year for growing hay and grazing cattle. Mr. Thomas is also responsible for the mowing and upkeep of the fencing for the spray fields. The current Spray Field Lease expires on May 29, 2025. A renewal of the lease extends the lease another 5 years until 2030. **Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to approve the renewed Spray Field Lease with Mr. John Thomas and authorize the City Manager to execute the document. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.**

10)e) Project/Program Updates with City Manager Williams (Verbal)

- Annual Audit and Financial Report will be presented at the next Council meeting with the Auditor present.
- Mid-Year Budget Amendment will be addressed at the next Council meeting and the CRA projects will also be discussed at that time.

- Upcoming Events included Small Town Saturday Night in June, drawing in more partners, etc. Market at the Depot continues and upcoming Memorial Day holiday.
- Other with City Manager referencing prior to July 1, fluoride will cease, and the City will be compliant with the State legislature. Spoke of excessive park use into the evenings and will need to keep the gates closed by 2:00-3:00pm at the Depot Pavilion and Water Tower. Noted that area could be available by prior scheduling with Parks.

COUNCIL/MAYOR SUBJECTS

Councilwoman Lizanich reported on the recent grant awards from the Citrus County Community Charitable Foundation. Questioned discussions of Whispering Pines Park with the State with City Manager Williams stating the State definitely wants to work together.

Councilman Craig attended his first TDC meeting and spoke of upcoming legislation. Noted the funds spent on extra advertising increased tourism and provided details regarding recognition of The Cove campground and the Withlacoochee State Trail.

Council President Davis thanked everyone.

CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA

Debbie Wheatley spoke of her use and familiarity of Whispering Pines Park and compared park users from the City and from outside the City.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

City Clerk

Council President